

Meeting of the UFI Board of Directors	
Date:	February 22 nd 2024
Time:	3 hours (09:00 – 12:00)
Place:	Classroom 73, Faculty of Education, Frælsið 20
Participants:	<p><i>Board members:</i> Ólavur Ellefsen (Chair) Marita Rasmussen (Deputy Chair) Elaine Munthe (External Member) – <i>via zoom</i> Anders Bjarklev (External Member) – <i>apologies</i> Jónrit Halling (Staff Representative) Marin Strøm (Staff Representative) Erika D. Høgnadóttir Andersen (Student Representative)</p> <p><i>Deputy board members:</i> Anna Kirstín Sigurðardóttir (Deputy External Representative) – <i>via zoom</i> Paul Kjartan Matras (Deputy Student Representative) Heidi Poulsen (Deputy External Representative) – <i>apologies</i> Elena D’Amelio (Deputy External Representative) – <i>apologies</i> Magnus Gaard (Deputy External Representative) – <i>apologies</i> Anna Sofía Lava (Deputy Staff Representative) – <i>apologies</i> Firouz Gaini (Deputy Staff Representative) – <i>apologies</i></p> <p>University administration attendees: Martin T. Zachariassen (Rector) Johan Hansen (University Director) Louisa A. Fjallsbak (Executive Secretary) Odd A. Bjellvåg (Finance Manager) was present for item 3 on the agenda. Rósa Egholm (Student Administration) was present for item 8 on the agenda.</p>
Minutes by:	Louisa A. Fjallsbak



Agenda for Board Meeting: Thursday 22nd February 2024, 9:00-12:00

Venue: The meeting will be ‘in person’ at the Faculty of Education, Frælsið 20, classroom 73.

Main purpose of the meeting: For Board Members to receive the usual updates, particularly a status of the work on the Strategic Plan 2030.

Proposed Agenda:

Coffee/breakfast from 8:30	
Part 1: 09:00-10:15	
Item	Recommendation to the Board
1. Chair’s welcome and approval of Agenda (Paper 1)	To approve agenda subject to any amendments.
2. Approval of minutes from meeting of November 10, 2023 (Paper 2)	To approve subject to any additions/changes.
3. Finance Report, preliminary for the year 2023 (Paper 3)	To note, subject to discussion.
4. Report on consultations since last meeting (Paper 4)	To note, subject to discussion.
5. Rector’s report on the period since last board meeting (Paper 5)	To note, subject to discussion.
10:15 – 10:45: Comfort and Refreshment Break	
Part 2: 10:45-12:00	
6. Status regarding work on strategic Plan 2030 (Paper 6)	To note, subject to discussion.
7. Approval of revised regulations for Study Boards (Paper 7)	To approve subject to any additions/changes.
8. Report on latest retention and progression data (Paper 8)	To note, subject to discussion.
12:00 Lunch in Canteen at Frælsið	

1. Chair’s welcome and approval of Agenda (Paper 1)

The Chairman of the Board, Ólavur Ellefsen (ÓE), opened the meeting and welcomed the board members.

There were no comments to the agenda for the meeting and it was then approved.

2. Approval of minutes from meeting of February 2023 (Paper 2)

The minutes from the last board meeting were reviewed.

Highlighted points were read out. There were no further comments, and the minutes were approved.

3. Finance Report 2023 (Paper 3)

Odd A. Bjellvåg (OB) presented the preliminary financial accounts for the year 2023.



The annual accounts for 2023 are within budget. He went through the notes to the report and clarified some items.

There is an increase in costs which is mainly caused by a general higher cost level due to inflation. The overall renovation costs of wing 1 and 3 at Frælsið 20 are higher than anticipated.

The government granted funding in 2023 for the project “Centre for Language technology” is not used in full; this is mainly due to the delayed approval of the Finance Act for 2023. Most of the expenses in 2023 are for salaries.

The single largest income source is the leadership course at SSD. Other income sources are courses requested by authorities. The total income from courses at all faculties is DKK 2,1 million. This figure is expected to rise in 2024.

The challenges in recruiting and to fill out all vacant positions also affect the expenditure. The budget for wages was not spent in full in 2023. The increase in salaries is within the expected range.

The chairman asked about the development on hiring new staff, and it is clear that the university is struggling to hire technical personnel. The university is unable to compete on salary and needs to focus on other factors, such as a good working environment and maybe a shorter work week. The short work week was discussed. Any change in the work week has to be part of the general salary agreements made between the Ministry of Finance and the relevant unions. Incentives for working at the university could be more freedom/autonomy.

The total projected expenditures for the year 2023 are DKK 147 million.

There were no comments to the review of the annual accounts. OB left the meeting.

4. Report on consultations since last meeting (University Director) (Paper 4)

JH explained that there have been seven consultations since the last meeting:

- 1) Legislative proposal regarding law on genetic research.
 - *The main comment from the university is that the proposal is too restrictive for researchers.*
- 2) Proposal for executive order regarding doping list
 - *No comments.*
- 3) Legislative proposal regarding a Faroese qualification framework
 - *Several technical comments. This framework is of great importance to the work relating to the Bologna process.*
- 4) Legislative proposal regarding a change to the primary school law
 - *In support.*
- 5) Legislative proposal regarding a change to the personal data protection law
 - *No comments.*



- 6) 4 executive orders regarding libraries
 - *No comments.*
- 7) Inquiry regarding a “space law”
 - *No comments.*

5. Rector’s report on the period since last board meeting (Paper 5)

MZ presented the board with an update on the focus areas based on Paper 5.

Education: Full participation in Bologna/EHEA. Quality assurance and enhancement. Flexible learning paths. Competence development.

The final version of the new **Regulations for Student Activity** (Reglugerð um lestrarvirkni) has passed the second hearing and evaluation by faculty leadership. One comment is that keeping track on attendance will add to the workload of staff. It has been decided that it is an obstacle setting up exact attendance requirements, therefore a softer approach is made on regulating attendance. Some faculties are already using required attendance for entire programmes or for specific courses.

The *comprehensive yearly monitoring* is postponed to spring 2025, partly due to the ongoing changes in the administration.

The review of the teacher’s education has just been completed. The external auditors have done an excellent job with assistance from board members. They had several comments for improvement. **The board will be presented with a brief written conclusion.**

ÓE asked when the next **external overall review** is planned. MZ explained, that this hasn’t been planned yet and it will be discussed with the ministry.

A workgroup, chaired by MZ, is working on a **shared academic calendar**. The objective is to support student mobility across faculties. The aim is to implement the shared calendar in 2025. Work will include standardising size, point systems, start and completion dates etc. The intention is to cut the length of the exam period, which is currently 5 weeks for some courses. In addition, a shared calendar will enable the university to arrange for courses in e.g. August prior to the beginning of the academic year.

Research: Increase capacity, external research funding and research collaboration. Competence development.

External research funding and PURE: 51% increase in submitted applicants in 2023 compared to 2022.

Changes are made to the executive order concerning the PhD programme. The aim is to have a PhD school set up before summer. There are three PhD study programme paths: student, industrial and fellow. There were 19 PhD students in 2023. An increased number of PhD courses is now available.

Enterprise and collaboration: The university is participating in an application to the European Universities Alliance initiative named EUNICoast. No funds are yet available for Setrið due to lack of Faroese participation in Erasmus+.



Research collaboration with company Varðin Pelagic with funds from Innovationsfonden.

Management and Administration: Develop Strategy 2030. Strengthen administration, New IT Systems, Competence development.

Results from the staff Survey October 2023:

- Disappointing result showed a small drop in satisfaction and loyalty.
- The score for job content is high but the score for working conditions is low.
- On management, both senior and immediate leadership, there is a clear drop. This will be taken seriously and will be further investigated.
- The overall score for bullying is 13% which is troubling and needs to be addressed. Local workshops and work with external consultants have taken place. It is clear, that there is no quick fix to these issues. Possible explanations were discussed.
 - It is unclear, what level of bullying is happening. The next survey should take this into accounts. The last student survey was much more specific.
 - For small faculties one incident will affect the result significantly
 - There is only one university on the Faroe Islands. Staff are not able to find other employment and may be left feeling stuck.
It is necessary to focus on enabling management. It is imperative, that problem issues and behaviour is dealt with immediately.
 - It is necessary to investigate if issues are new or if there are older underlying causes.
 - The current structural changes and moving workplaces are adding to frustrations. The centralisation of LSS is stressful. There is a transition period where staff do both existing work and are starting in new roles in new teams.
 - High levels of sick leaves amongst staff leave remaining staff shorthanded. It is worth examining if external help can be brought in.
 - Some staff has moved from Gróthúsið to J.C. Svabosgøta 7 due to lack of space.
 - It is crucial, that management show that they care for employees and do what they promise.

The Chairman pointed out that the board should be informed on the follow-up work.

New IT Systems: Kervi+ is not ready yet new study place applications and the old system, Próvbókin, will be used. The new system looks very promising, and Greenlandic institutions are looking into the system as well.

Skúlanet is not ready for implementation yet. This system is intended to increase cyber security. A new supplier, Moxis, is now hosting and supporting Moodle.

University campus: New main campus building. Renovation of old school building at Frælsið

- It is anticipated that the project development law for the new campus building is presented to Parliament before April 2024.
- The cost of renovating Wing 5 is a little over budget.
- It is unclear when Setrið needs to vacate Sjóvinnuhúsið. The lease agreement has a termination period of one year, and Setrið has not received a formal lease cancellation. A meeting is planned with the municipality of Tórshavn this month.
- A special session in parliament will be held on higher education after request from two parliament members.



Other activities and updates

- The student counselling service is currently highly faculty specific. The aim is to work towards more collaboration, and the team will be located together in Frælsið 20.

6. Status regarding work on Strategic Plan 2030; proposal for Foundations and Strategic Pillars (Paper 6a) and Time Plan for Developing Strategy (Paper 6b and 6c).

The Rector presented a proposal for the board to create a new structure for core strategy document. He explained the work on the strategy documents prior to this proposal. The document includes input from the staff strategy seminar in January 2024.

The proposed new structure for the core strategic document is as follows,

- Foundations for a Faroese University (mission)
- Strategic Pillars (vision)
- Strategic objectives

The proposed strategic documents are,

- 1) Core strategy document (Delivery: May 30, 2024)
- 2) Selected key-performance indicators (KPIs) including goals (Delivery: September 20, 2024)
- 3) Rolling 2-year implementation plan (Delivery: 14 November 2024)

The chairman explained that the current strategic plan ends this year. The new strategy will be in place from 1st January 2025. **The board agreed to this time scope.**

General remarks from the discussion are,

- that this structure is comparable with that of other universities.
- that the faculties have core work, that people care deeply about, and this should be recognised, acknowledged, and reflected in the strategy.
- that the strategic plan for the short timeframe should be encompassed in the KPI's.

The proposed structure was discussed. The intention is that the foundations supplement the mission. The Chairman proposed to keep a mission statement. **The board agreed to keep a mission statement.**

The board approved the new proposal and rector will continue with this work.

7. Approval of revised regulations for Study Boards (Paper 7)

There have been discussions about the mandate to approve programme descriptions. This has been clarified in the revised regulations to be the Dean.

In emergency situations e.g due to illness, the rector can make exceptions from the regulations.

The board approved the revised regulations for Study Boards.



8. Report on latest retention and progression data (Paper 8)

Rósa Egholm joined the meeting to present the report on student retention. Some of the points are mentioned below.

The numbers indicate that men have a higher dropout rate, which is surprising because the last student survey suggested that women are more stressed. The student survey showed that men to a higher degree live at home with a lower cost level and without children. Women are more stressed due to working longer hours and worry about higher costs.

The student survey identified financial issues as one of the most serious issues for students dropping out.

The average student exam fail rate is one exam during their entire programme.

There is a clear correlation between dropout rate and the rate of non-attendance and failed exams.

The overall percentage of finished graduates is high, which is very good.

The board discussed how students can be supported with e.g. a talk with a student counsellor immediately after a failed exam.

MZ explained that numbers from the presented report are used in the yearly monitoring of programmes.

9. Chair's summation and concluding remarks.

The chair of the board thanked members for attending the meeting and concluded that the meeting had completed the items on the agenda.

The meeting ended at 12:00.